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Research

The Return of the 1997 Allendale Paleoindian Expedition

By Albert C. Goodyear

Institute researchers and guests spent four weeks again this year, from May 6 through May 31, excavating significant prehistoric sites on land and underwater along Smiths Lake Creek in Allendale County. This annual project, known as the Allendale Paleoindian Expedition, represents the fourth year that sustained scientific excavations have taken place on a series of ancient Paleoindian sites thought to be in excess of 10,000 years old. The expedition receives its primary funding and labor force from members of the public who register for a tax-deductible donation to SCIAA's Archaeological Research Trust. This year, a total of 42 people registered, coming from as far away as Maine, Florida, and Texas. Without the help of these individuals it would not have been possible for our project to have gone into the field. This year the expedition was joined by SCIAA's entire Underwater Archaeology Division which worked for three weeks in Smiths Lake Creek. Funding for the underwater operations was provided by a grant from the Archaeological Research Trust and a private donor.

Excavations continued for the fourth straight year at the Big Pine Tree site where strong evidence of a Clovis occupation has been identified. This site has produced several fluted blanks and preforms in the deepest archaeological layer along with classic Paleoindian tools including tiny microblades. Above this layer lies a zone producing Dalton points and



Completed profile after excavation at the Big Pine Tree site. (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)

Taylor side-notched points thought to be 10,000 years old or older. This year four 2-meter squares were excavated forming an 8-meter long trench. These excavations produced artifacts in their stratigraphic positions including fluted bifaces at the bottom. Upon completion, this trench was deepened using a backhoe to allow a view of how the artifact bearing soils of the Holocene overlie the ancient pre-human Pleistocene terrace. The north wall of the trench was then drawn and photographed.

The graduate student supervisors who oversaw the excavation of Big Pine Tree site this year included Al Woods of the University of Florida and Rhonda Brewer and Grayal Farr both of Florida State University. Mark Muniz of the University of Florida

aided in the last week and helped draw the profile. Joy Staats, a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina, aided in the excavations and artifact identification at Big Pine Tree.

This year saw the excavation of the Charles site which was discovered by Tommy Charles in 1982. Charles directed excavations here with the help of graduate students, Sean Maroney of USC and Grayal Farr, and the help of many hardworking volunteers who battled the formidable Savannah River swamp mosquitoes and the clay soil. Andy Hemmings of the University of Florida also joined the dig in the remaining days and helped finish the excavation. Four 2-meter squares arranged in a transect perpendicular to Smiths Lake were excavated to the sterile Pleistocene clay terrace which

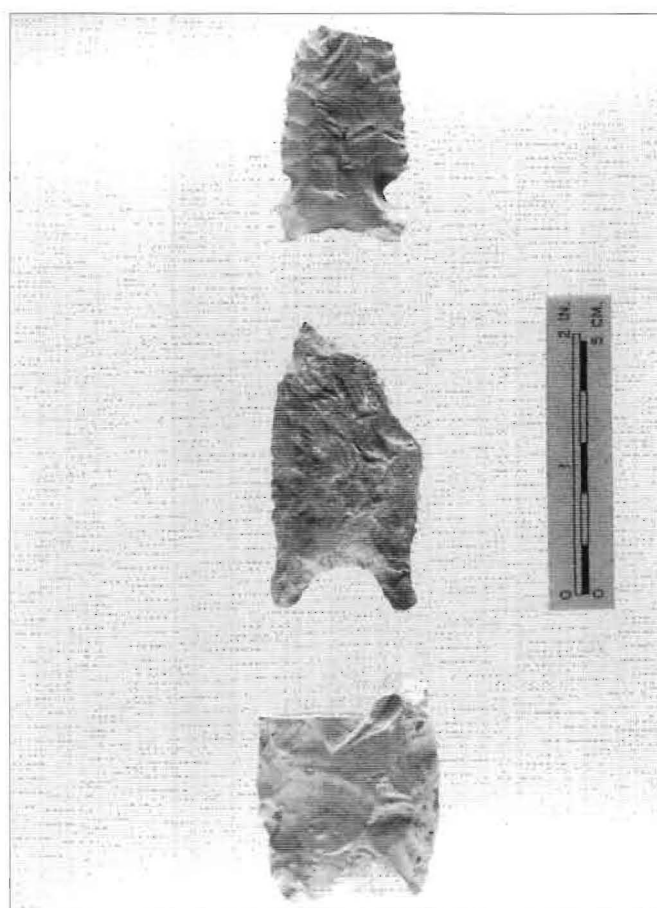
provided a cross-sectional profile of the site. An area 2 by 4 meters was also excavated toward the creek edge. The ancient soils or paleosols were classified in the field by Dr. John E. Foss of the University of Tennessee in order to reconstruct the stratigraphy and environmental history of the site.

The Charles site has produced a number of Paleoindian lanceolate preform fragments over the years that have eroded from a layer of weathered artifacts visible in the cutbank profile. This basal Paleoindian layer was contacted in excavations, although in a lighter density than observed in the creek bank. Several fragments of early stage biface blanks and preforms were found correlating with the material eroding from the cutbank. No diagnostic Paleoindian points were found. However, the preforms that have been recovered over the years from the bank tend to resemble bifaces that would result in Suwannee or Dalton points rather than Clovis points. A concentration of chipped stone items was found in the lowest zone of the excavation that, when removed, revealed a reddened, burned-looking soil resting on the Pleistocene terrace. This

appears to be a Paleoindian hearth. A soil sample was taken which will be floated for charcoal in an effort to get an AMS radiocarbon date.

Under the direction of Christopher Amer, SCIAA's Underwater Archaeol-

ogy Division spent three weeks working in Smiths Lake Creek in conjunction with the land digs. Staff included James Spirek, Lynn Harris, Joe Beatty, and Carl Naylor. Research Affiliate Brinnen Carter of the University of Florida worked as an underwater archaeologist and was responsible for all cartographic work. Brinnen also worked the last week on excavating the Charles site. Hobby divers Doug Boehme and George Pledger gave considerable help as well.



Diagnostic projectile points of Big Pine Tree site's different depths: A Clovis preform(bottom), a Dalton point (center), a Taylor side-notched point (top). (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)

Michael Phipps of the Wateree Dive Shop did underwater video of the Big Pine Tree site.

At the Charles site, a continuous topographic transect was recorded to assess the creek bottom profile. A

natural outcrop of chert, previously seen in 1985, was located and mapped. Data recovery by dredging was conducted in front of the eroding profile which yielded some Early and Middle Archaic points, plus examples of possible Paleoindian biface preforms.

A survey of Smiths Lake Creek between Charles and Big Pine Tree revealed a large, natural outcrop of chert boulders of stone tool quality. More survey of the entire creek length is planned for 1998.

At Big Pine Tree, extensive topographic data were recorded using multiple transects that spanned the creek. Data recovery was conducted in an area near the eroding bank profile to recover artifacts that had fallen into the creek. Numerous Archaic points and biface blanks were found plus one rhyolite Dalton point. More data recovery is planned for 1998 in the deeper part of the creek. No natural outcrop of chert was found in front of Big Pine Tree, which seems surprising given the great density of chipped lithic debris from the site.

This year the Allendale Paleoindian Expedition received its usual share of visitors from the public and visiting scientists. We had a special occasion when the First Lady of South Carolina, Mary Wood Beasley, wife of

Governor David M. Beasley, paid a visit with a school group from Columbia. Dinner parties for our staff and guests, which seem to have become a tradition, were given again this year by Dr. Lucius Laffitte and his wife Darryl of

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Allendale and by Dr. David G. Anderson and his wife Jennalee of Williston. These gracious hosts provided great food and hospitality, and otherwise provided a pleasant social forum for archaeologists and folk with common interests to come together.

Once again, the real success in the expedition lies with the generosity and hard work of the guests who registered. Without the donation given in registration, the project would not have been able to spend a month in the field. In 1997, 42 people signed up for one or more weeks of work. The registrants this year were:

First Week

John Arnold, Columbia, SC
David S. Butler, Winter Springs, FL
Matt Cleaver, Seminole, FL
Virginia Culp, Mountain Rest, SC
Paula Fleming, Mt. Pleasant, SC
Berne Hannon, Taylors, SC
Susan Hollyday, Nashville, TN
John Moran, Hilton Head Island, SC
Dana Parson, Cleveland, GA
Stewart Parson, Cleveland, GA
Shawn Stafford, Orlando, GA
Kenn Steffy, Sumter, SC

Second Week

Lezlie Mills Barker, Greenville, SC
Marilyn Blanchard, Aiken, SC
John Connors, Waco, TX
Robert Hammond, Westbrook, ME
Susan Hollyday, Nashville, TN
Ed Mann, Aiken, SC
Bonnie Martin, Columbia, SC
Alison Simpson, Greenville, SC
John Simpson, Greenville, SC
Karl Stell, Lancaster, SC

Third Week

Robert Allison, Raleigh, NC
Nanci Blackwood, Hilton Head Island, SC
Bob Cole, Hopkins, SC
John Connors, Waco, TX

Skip Johnson, Lilburn, GA
Dale Joslin, Lilburn, GA
Dorothy Moore, New Smyrna Beach, FL
Lawrence C. Parham, Latta, SC
John Rich, Columbia, SC
Gerrie Sinners, Kiawah Island, SC
Margie Tolly, Hilton Head Island, SC

Fourth Week

Cynthia Curry, Charlotte, NC
Hal Curry, Charlotte, NC
John L. Frierson, Lexington, SC
April Gordon, Rock Hill, SC
Don Gordon, Rock Hill, SC
Belinda Hardin, Chapel Hill, NC
Bill Lyles, Columbia, SC
Terry Murphy, Macon, GA
Aaron Von Frank, Rock Hill, SC

I would like to again thank each of the participants for making this season such a success. Their good cheer and hard work is greatly appreciated. Clariant Corporation, the owner of the sites and our generous host, is also gratefully acknowledged. The Clariant

staff provided great logistical support, especially with the backhoe work, and were helpful in every way to us and our guests. Use of the spacious camping facilities is greatly appreciated. Mike Anderson, Director of Human Resources for Clariant, has always opened the doors and made sure we had what we needed.

Plans are being developed for the 1998 Allendale Paleoindian Expedition which will run for four weeks from May 5 through May 30. Next year's work will include both land and underwater archaeology excavations. For further information, contact Al Goodyear at SCIAA.

Funding Needed for Allendale

Funds are needed to support laboratory research including analysis and cataloging, soil micro-morphology, and photography. All donations are tax-deductible. Please send checks in care of Dr. Al C. Goodyear, payable to the USC Educational Foundation.



The Charles site excavation crew, fourth week. (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)



Mary Wood Beasley, First Lady of South Carolina (with camera), school children, and parents visit the Allendale Paleoindian excavations. (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)

The Project Director, Albert Goodyear, explains to visitors the excavation at the Big Pine Tree site. (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)



Dinner party at the beautiful home of Lucius and Darryl Laffitte in Allendale. (Photo by Daryl P. Miller)